

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
ACDA-12 AGRE-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00
CIAE-00 COME-00 DLOS-09 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-08
EPA-01 SOE-02 DOE-11 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 INR-10
INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSF-01 OES-07
OMB-01 PA-01 PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 /128 W
-----120424 151559Z /47

O R 151406Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5444

INFO USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 1274

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, PBOR, PEPR, NO, UR

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER ON GREY ZONE FLAP

REF: OSLO 1235

SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE CALLS MARCH 15, I SPOKE WITH PRIME MINISTER NORDLI AND STORTING PRESIDENT GUTTORM HANSEN ABOUT LAST WEEK'S EVENTS. I REITERATED TO THEM THAT THE USG HAS CONSISTENTLY VIEWED THE GREY ZONE ACCORD AS A BILATERAL ISSUE AND NOTED THAT WE HAD BEEN UNPLEASANTLY SURPRISED, AS THEY HAD BEEN, BY LAST WEEK'S PRESS STORIES. BOTH APPRECIATED MY CALLS AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE NON-SOCIALIST PRESS, RATHER THAN THE USG, HAD BEEN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE UNFORTUNATE TIMING IN THE AFFAIR. WHILE BOTH SAID THE ISSUE WAS NOW CLOSED AS FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED, IT IS CLEAR THAT WE WILL NEED TO CONTINUE MENDING FENCES IN VARIOUS LABOR PARTY CIRCLES IN THE WEEKS AHEAD.

END SUMMARY.

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1. AS SUGGESTED BY FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND IN MY MARCH 11 CALL ON HIM (REFTEL), I ASKED FOR CALLS ON PRIME MINISTER NORDLI AND STORTING PRESIDENT GUTTORM HANSEN TO REVIEW LAST WEEK'S PRESS STORIES ABOUT THE GREY ZONE. IN SEPARATE CALLS MARCH 15, I TOLD THEM THAT I WANTED TO DISPEL ANY REMAINING CLOUDS OF SUSPICION THAT MIGHT EXIST ABOUT THE OFFICIAL US ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GREY ZONE. OUR OFFICIAL POSITION HAS ALL

ALONG BEEN THAT THE GREY ZONE ACCORD WAS A BILATERAL ISSUE BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE US ON WHICH IT WAS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR US TO COMMENT. THIS WAS A VIEW EXPRESSED DIRECTLY TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER BY SECRETARY VANCE LAST SUMMER AND REITERATED BY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VINE IN OCTOBER. THEREFORE, WE HAD BEEN SURPRISED AND CONCERNED TO SEE THE UNTIMELY PUBLICATION OF THE PRESS STORIES LAST WEEK ALLEGING OTHERWISE. I WAS AWARE THAT THESE STORIES HAD CAUSED DIFFICULTIES FOR BOTH NORDLI AND HANSEN AND THEREFORE WANTED TO REVIEW OUR POSITION.

2. I STATED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO PRESS BRIEFING BY A USG OFFICIAL AS SOME STORIES HAD ALLEGED. MOREOVER, NO RESPONSIBLE USG OFFICIAL WOULD CHARACTERIZE THE GREY ZONE AGREEMENT AS ALLEGED IN THE PRESS. I STRESSED THAT WHEN MY GOVERNMENT WANTS TO COMMUNICATE ITS VIEWS TO THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT, WE COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY AND OPENLY TO MEMBERS OF THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT. WE DO NOT CONDUCT OUR FOREIGN POLICY THROUGH THE PRESS.

3. IN CONCLUSION I RESTATED THE IMPORTANCE OUR GOVERNMENT PLACES ON CLOSE AND FRIENDLY TIES WITH NORWAY AND ON BROADENING THESE TIES WHERE POSSIBLE. I EMPHASIZED THAT ONE OF THE ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WE VALUE MOST IS THE FRANK, OPEN AND EASY WAY IN WHICH OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS CAN COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER ON MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST.

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4. IN REPLY, NORDLI STATED THAT HE HAD ALL ALONG ASSUMED THAT THE PRESS STORIES DID NOT REFLECT OFFICIAL US VIEWS SINCE HE HAD FREQUENTLY DISCUSSED THESE ISSUES WITH US OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT. HE WOULD HAVE BEEN SURPRISED, HE SAID, IF THE USG HAD CHOSEN TO COMMUNICATE ITS VIEWS IN SUCH A WAY TO NORWAY. GUTTORM HANSEN ALSO NOTED THAT HE RECOGNIZED THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT BY THE USG TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN THE STORTING'S GREY ZONE DEBATE SINCE HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY "AFTENPOSTEN'S" EDITOR THAT THE PAPER ITSELF HAD WRITTEN THE STORY WEEKS BEFORE RUNNING IT.

5. NONETHELESS, BOTH LEADERS NOTED THAT THEY FEARED THE INCIDENT WOULD REKINDLE ANTI-US FEELINGS AMONG SOME LABOR PARTY ELEMENTS, FEELINGS WHICH THEY EACH NOTED HAD LARGELY DISSIPATED SINCE THE END OF THE VIETNAM WAR. EACH MAN SPECIFICALLY STATED HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO COMBAT ANY SUCH TENDENCY.

6. THE PRIME MINISTER NOTED THAT NORWAY RECOGNIZES SHE HAS DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WITH THE SOVIETS IN THE NORTH, ESPECIALLY AROUND SPITSBERGEN. HE STATED THAT HE WAS QUITE

SURE THE ONLY WAY TO RESOLVE THESE WAS TO HAVE THE USSR
ACCEPT NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY THERE. NORDLI NOTED THAT THERE
HAS BEEN SOME CONCERN IN NORWAY AND ELSEWHERE THAT THE BILATERAL
SOLUTION TO THE GREY ZONE WOULD BE USED AS AN EXAMPLE FOR
SOLUTIONS ELSEWHERE IN THE BARENTS SEA. HOWEVER, "WE IN THE
NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT KNOW THAT THIS IS NOT--CANNOT BE--
A BILATERAL PROBLEM BETWEEN NORWAY AND THE USSR. IT IS
MULTILATERAL." IN CONCLUSION, THE PRIME MINISTER STATED THAT
HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD KEEP ITS FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS INFORMED
ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE AREA, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST.

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5443

INFO USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 1274

7. COMMENT: BOTH NORDLI AND GUTTORM HANSEN OBVIOUSLY
APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW LAST WEEKS' EVENTS.
THOUGH IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY ALL ALONG KNEW THE US WAS
NOT BEHIND THE PRESS STORIES, IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT THE
STORIES STIRRED UP LABOR'S VOCAL LEFT WING AND CAUSED THESE
TWO COMMITTED ATLANTICISTS REAL PROBLEMS. ALMOST NO ISSUE
IS MORE EMOTIONAL IN THIS OTHERWISE CALM LAND THAN THE ISSUE
OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND THE IMPRESSION OF THE US INTER-
FERING IN THE STORTING'S GREY ZONE DEBATE PLAYED DIRECTLY
ON THAT EMOTION, ALLOWING THE LEFT TO FAN THE SAME NATIONALIST
SENTIMENTS WHICH KOSYGIN'S OUTBURST IN HELSINKI HAD RELEASED.

8. I JUDGE THAT WE HAVE GOTTEN SOME IMPORTANT FENCES
MENDED NOW BUT THAT WE WILL HAVE TO KEEP WORKING ON IT
IN THE WEEKS AHEAD.
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Draft Date: 15 mar 1978
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